

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton

## 'Nothing About Us Without Us'

PAGE 6

Bailey Brandt of Springfield and Mikea Jackson at the SPARC Gala.

## Hunt Valley Tradition

PAGE 3

## Voting Matters

PAGE 3

## Empanadas!

PAGE 4

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ PIZZA, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 9-15, 2023

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# Fairfax County Investing in Electric School Buses

**Diesel school buses will be gone by 2035.**

By Mike Salmon  
The Connection

Fairfax County is taking more steps into the electric vehicle world with a fleet of electric school buses to join the mix, taking another step away from the internal combustion engine.

Fairfax County Public Schools started with eight electric buses in 2019, which are already operational, and help transport more than 141,000 eligible bus riders to and from school each day, FCPS said. By 2035, FCPS hopes to have an all-electric fleet.

On the “Battle of the Buses,” promotional video on the Fairfax County website, the quiet electric buses are called “the strong silent type.”

According to the county, FCPS was chosen to receive the buses in a competitive process after apply-

ing for a grant from Dominion Energy in fall 2019. Dominion Energy covers the difference in cost so that school districts pay no more for electric buses than they would for diesel models.

The required charging infrastructure has been installed and is maintained by Dominion at the Stonecroft Transportation Center located in Chantilly.

FCPS applied for and received another grant from the Department of Environmental Quality for an additional 10 electric buses and received them in the summer 2022. Last summer, the county also launched a fleet of electric trash trucks as part of the all-electric effort.

In the big picture, the transportation sector accounts for nearly one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions.

The Environmental Protection Agency said that to address the growing climate crisis and to meet the goal of net-zero GHG emissions economy-wide, “we must eliminate nearly all greenhouse gas emissions from the sector by 2050 and implement a holistic strategy to achieve a future mobility system



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

The EV1580 quietly picks up students in Newington.

that is clean, safe, secure, accessible, affordable, and equitable, and provides sustainable transporta-

tion options for people and goods.” EPA’s Clean School Bus Program provides \$5 billion over five years

to replace existing school buses with zero-emission and low-emission models.

Remodeling Your Kitchen?  
**Make sure it's Nicely Done!**  
Call (703) 764-3748 or stop by our showroom for a free design consultation.

- Family Owned
- Licensed and Insured
- Part of your community since 2003

[www.NicelyDoneKitchens.com](http://www.NicelyDoneKitchens.com)

**NICELY DONE**  
Kitchens and Baths  
8934 Burke Lake Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22151

**PRINT AND  
DIGITAL OPTIONS  
TO REACH YOUR  
TARGET MARKET**

Email Blasts  
Print  
Digital Billboards  
Sponsored Content  
Exclusive Front Page Shoutout  
Social Media



**THE CONNECTION**  
Newspapers & Online

For Advertising:  
Call 703.778.9431  
or email  
[advertising@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:advertising@connectionnewspapers.com)

# Election Day Voters Share Their Motivation

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

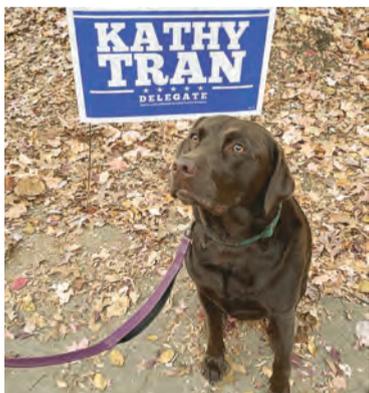
**O**n Election Day morning, The Connection turned out at the polls at several precincts to talk to voters. We asked why they chose to come out on Nov. 7, Election Day itself rather than for early voting. Here's what they told us.



Zia Ullah who came to vote after his night shift, says "It's our duty to vote as a citizen, and it's easier to go to vote, and then go to sleep."



Eddie Patton, who moved to the area in August, says, "I try to vote on Election Day to see if anyone else shows up on an off election year."



Three year old Remy, a Chocolate Lab, is not eligible to vote, but enthusiastically greeted voters outside the polling place with a nose for the excitement of election day.



This year, moms Sarah Koeppel, Cynthia Yossef, and Katherine Kopeland, take their part in a 35-year tradition of offering an election day bake sale at the Hunt Valley School precinct to support a 6th grade class end of school party.



Sisters, Lucy Little, a sophomore at Edison High School and Abi Little, a senior at Thomas Jefferson, were at the polls to be involved in the democratic process and support their candidate for School Board, Kevin Pinkney



Educator Alison Wolfe, with her husband Bryce, and two year old son Asher, who has been to the polls four times though not yet eligible to vote, says it's important to her to show her son the voting process, just as her mother showed her.



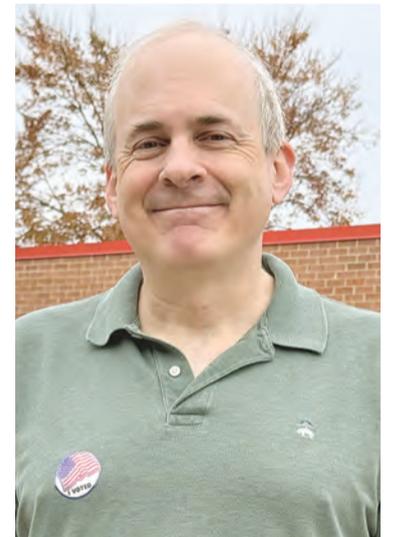
Diane Heckert, "didn't get around to voting early, but also like the tradition of voting on Election Day." She wants to maintain those in office that are better for the country, and says, "That starts at the local level."



Stacie Becker, a 24 year resident and educator, shares, "time" is the main reason she votes on Election Day, saying, "Easier when I'm not rushing to get to school, and I know where to go, and the poll is open all day."



Paul Hughs, a 20-year resident, likes this polling place to vote before work, noting, "This year there were a lot of negative ads, talking about what's wrong with the opponent rather than giving information about themselves; it seemed very partisan this year."



Riou Heaton, an 18-year resident, likes the location of his local polling place, calling it "super convenient." He said, "locally the county is very Democratic, but voting in State-wide races is very important to me."



Ed Callahan, a 43 year resident of the area, shared that he likes "the convenience of the location at the school for voting rather than the early voting locations."



Andrew MacKnight enjoys voting in person versus mailing in a ballot, saying "It feels different and I've never had to wait in 34 years of voting in northern Virginia." He adds, since his wife is a teacher he wants to see Democrats continue on the school board.

# My Empanadas Offers Authentic Peruvian Food

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

## New restaurant is open in Fairfax City's Courthouse Plaza.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City continues to be a destination for worldwide cuisine, and one of its newest restaurants is My Empanadas. It's at 10394 Willard Way, in the Courthouse Plaza shopping center, and recently held its ribbon cutting – followed by samples of its tasty offerings.

"Who doesn't love an empanada?" asked Mayor Catherine Read. She then told owner Sherley Stuva, "Your Peruvian empanadas are a favorite at farmers markets, and we welcome unique businesses to the City. I have a feeling you'll also be popular with the college students living behind your restaurant [at The Flats on University]. You're bringing a varied, international and delicious cuisine to the City. Welcome to Fairfax and thank you for choosing us."

Councilmember Tom Ross said it's also a great location because it's near the popular Chubby Squirrel Brewing Co. and several residential neighborhoods. And Tess Rollins, Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. executive director, told Stuva how exciting it is that she opened her restaurant here.

"In Fairfax, we can eat food from all around the world," added Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennifer Rose. "And now, we can carry your food down the street with us, as a handheld. So welcome and congratulations."

City Treasurer Tom Scibilia told Stuva, "On behalf of the Treasury Department, I hope you crush it. And it's nice that so many of your friends and family members are here to celebrate with you today."

"Small businesses are the backbone of the community," said Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson. "And we'll be a partner with you in your success."

A customer even spoke up from the crowd of well-wishers there for the ceremony. "As a Peruvian national, I'm proud of Sherley," said Yuri Agostini. "I hope you all enjoy the food."

Stuva previously had her restaurant in the Manassas Mall but closed it and reopened in Fairfax. Her business manager, Eric Moye Gordon, learned this space was a former bubble tea spot and the owner wanted to sell. And, said Stuva, "I knew this area would be a good place to bring empanadas."

She's originally from Peru but has been in the U.S. for 30 years. My Empanadas is open daily, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., except on Tuesdays. Stuva said business is growing and the menu items are well-known and enjoyed by both Peruvians and non-Peruvians.

"We've received a friendly reception here; people have been really nice," she said. "We offer quality food that's fresh out of the oven – nothing left over. Everything is made in the moment from scratch. And our empanada dough is very special and has a unique texture."



Celebrating after cutting the ribbon are (from left) Tess Rollins, Jennifer Rose, Sherley Stuva, Catherine Read, Page Johnson, Tom Ross, Tom Scibilia and Tara Borwey with the City's Economic Development team.



From left, Maribel Lecca, granddaughter Kai and son Marco Gonzales are happy to eat traditional, Peruvian dishes.

But that's not all this restaurant offers. One of the most popular main dishes there is Lomo Saltado – marinated slices of beef stir-fried with onions, yellow Peruvian chilis and tomatoes, served with French fries and rice. "We use real Peruvian ingredients, such as the yellow peppers, and the meat is very tender – and that's what makes the difference," explained Stuva.

She said customers also like the Peruvian Ceviche, made with fresh fish cooked in lime juice and served with toasted Peruvian corn, sweet potatoes and onions. And for breakfast, a popular dish is Pan con Chicharron – fried pork and crispy sweet potato with red-onion relish on a Portuguese roll (which has a light, golden crust and a soft, chewy texture).

Another customer favorite is the restaurant's Huancaína sauce made with aji amarillo peppers, which provide a cayenne-pepper-type heat and tropical-sweet undertones. One of the entrees it's used in is Tallarines a la Huancaína con Lomo Saltado – pasta with this sauce topped with strips of beef tender-

loin sautéed with onions and tomatoes.

The large menu also includes chicken dishes, Peruvian tamales, a variety of beverages, and desserts such as tres leches cake, alfajores (powdered-sugar-coated cookies filled with dulce de leche), orange cake and chocolate cake.

Agostini especially likes the Ceviche. "It's the national dish of Peru and is good and fresh," he said. "And the Lomo Saltado is very tasty and is a typical Peruvian dish originally brought to Peru by Chinese immigrants."

Enjoying lunch together at a table outdoors were Marco Gonzales, his daughter Kai, 5, and his mother, Maribel Lecca. Kai had Salchipapas – French fries with sliced sausage, and both she and her dad liked it.

Gonzales ordered a Peruvian-style chicken-salad sandwich. "We came here for my birthday today, and my sandwich was really tasty," he said. "It had a good flavor, different than the typical chicken sandwich."

Lecca, who had the Pan con Chicharron, also said her sandwich was delicious. "This



Julissa Siegel enjoying lunch at My Empanadas.

is good Peruvian food and it's not that expensive," she said. "We're from Peru, and we're happy this restaurant came here. I'd been looking for empanadas nearby."

Gonzales said he'd recommend My Empanadas to others because "There aren't that many restaurants in Fairfax City that offer traditional Peruvian food, except for Peruvian chicken."

Meanwhile, Julissa Siegel was having lunch inside the restaurant. Several dishes were offered buffet-style, after the ribbon cutting, and she chose several to sample. She had Papa Rellena, a mashed-potato ball stuffed with beef and deep-fried; Tallarin Saltado de Pollo, linguine with stir-fried chicken and vegetables; and both chicken and beef empanadas.

"It's all amazing," said Siegel. "The empanada dough isn't salty, but a little sweet, and the chicken and onions taste really good. I would 100-percent recommend this place to others. If you want something good to eat – and delicious, well-made empanadas – come here."

# Plans Shared for Temporary Senior Center

**Springfield District last to receive senior service space.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Springfield District residents are finally seeing action on an active adult community center within their district; the only district now without a dedicated building for active adults. The current work is for a temporary location. A permanent center is likely still close to ten years away, and dependent on possible funding secured through a bond referendum in 2026.

For the temporary location, the Board of Supervisors approved a five-year lease, with multiple one year options, within the Huntsman Square Shopping Center; a site not far from the South Run Recreation Center.

Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services has conducted a series

of information and listening sessions about the temporary site. Drawing about 40 people at each of the sessions, residents heard about the center draft layout and expected program offerings. Significant time also was reserved during the sessions to hear ideas from potential users for inclusion in the design and use plan. At the Oct. 20 afternoon session held at Pohick Library, suggestions included mirrored walls, ping pong tables, raised class instructor platforms, sound deadening partitions, increased ventilation for athletic classes; and, though acknowledged that the space was not likely right for it, the increasingly popular request for pickleball. County design staff declined to provide any cost estimates.

Senior programs in the Springfield District operate now "without walls," meaning there is no dedicated building space. Instead offerings are held in rooms within libraries, the West Springfield Government Center, and area churches. Community centers in other Districts, similar to the one envisioned for Burke/Springfield, operate from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Huntsman Square Shopping Mall leased space, home to future temporary senior center, after remodeling former retail store space, now dark windows.

six days per week with a focus on senior programs, but include multi-generation use.

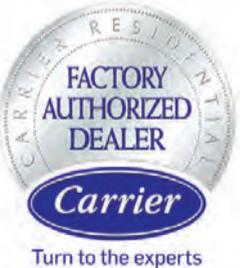
The Burke-Springfield draft center layout envisions a large open center space, amenable to many uses, five activity rooms, a com-

puter bank, and rest rooms. The project pre-design phase began in July, with the mall store remodeling design continuing through January 2024, for an April 2024 construction start. The tentative completion of the build-out is anticipated for

December 2024. The temporary location could continue under the lease agreement for up to ten years, awaiting a permanent center.

For more information on the project and its status, see <http://bit.ly/BSCAA>

## ENJOY THE COMFORT NOW...PAY FOR IT ON YOUR TERMS!



Turn to the experts

**100% Financing Available**



0% APR FOR 36 MONTHS\*

with equal payments. Minimum purchase of \$7,500.

\$74 (Reg \$84)

Don't Forget Your Safety & Maintenance INSPECTION

Per System

**SALES • SERVICE • INSTALLATION**

- 24 Hour Emergency Service
- Free Estimate on System Replacement
- Senior & Military Discounts
- 100% Satisfaction Guarantee

- Planned Maintenance Agreements
- FREE Second Opinion on System Failure
- We Service All Brands
- Up Front Pricing

Brennan's has been proudly serving Northern Virginia since 1979. Our team of highly trained professionals are at your disposal ready to deliver a quality product and quality service at a fair price.

"We are here when you need us."

†System rebates ranging from \$0 to \$1,600 depending on equipment purchased. Rebates subject to change. Expires 11/18/23. \*With approved credit on qualifying equipment. Call Brennan's for complete details.

Carrier Rebates up to \$1,600†



CALL NOW

703-491-2771

info@brennanshvac.com  
www.brennansHVAC.com




# GALA



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine was named a SPARC hero for his commitment to young adults with severe and multiple disabilities by championing SPARC's funding request to open three SPARC centers, two on Fairfax County's Rt. 1 corridor and one in Leesburg, Va.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

From left: Adam Toobin, James Dyke, master of ceremonies, and State Senator Richard L. Saslaw, who received SPARC's Lifetime Achievement Award for his 48 years of public service including thwarting an attempt to kill Medicaid Expansion, thus providing over 400,000 Virginians with health insurance coverage.

## SPARC's Inaugural Gratitude Gala

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine and State Sen. Richard L. Saslaw honored.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n a stunningly beautiful fall evening, SPARC participants arrived at their gala. Dressed in creative cocktail attire, they graced the red carpet leading into the grand ballroom of the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott. It was a dream come true for the young adults.

SPARC is the acronym for Specially Adapted Resources Clubs. It is a nonprofit organization that provides vital day programs for adult participants with severe and multiple disabilities, and the evening of Saturday, Nov. 4, was their 2023 Gratitude Gala. The young adults planned the event themselves because they believed in the mission of SPARC, "Nothing about us without us," and they had two goals for the gala.

"The event was created by our participants as an answer to the question, 'What can SPARC do to help you live the life of your dreams?' Overwhelmingly, they wanted a sparkling event, pun intended, at which they could showcase their talents, make new friends, socialize, laugh, have fun, and dance however they fancied," said Ellen Dyke, SPARC's board chair.

Another goal of the reception-style gala emerged: everyone deserves a chance to attend SPARC. The gala raised funds for SPARC's cost-effective program, which assists young adults who have outgrown the K-12 system's special education support and are ineligible for other community-based programs that help people with severe disabilities.

SPARC's public-private partnership with Fairfax County is an alternative to the Medicaid model. It provides a choice for many adults with severe disabilities who do not fit



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

From left, Debi Alexander, executive director of SPARC, joins Joanne Adams and Dave Adams, members of the SPARC Board of Directors, to acknowledge SPARC partners at the 2023 Gratitude Gala.

into traditional day support programs funded by Medicaid.

The reason SPARC participants called their event the "Gratitude Gala," Dyke said, was that they wanted to express their gratitude to all of the attendees, sponsors, elected officials, and others who helped them realize not only their dream for the evening but also their concern for others and their willingness to give of their time, energy, financial resources, and, above all, their humanity.

Mark Ingrao, interim CEO and president of the Dulles Regional Chamber and chair of the Reston Hospital board of directors,

served as auctioneer for the evening's live auction while the silent auction continued in the hallway. Items in the silent auction included original wheelchair action art by SPARC participants. Jonah, one of the artists, said, "Everyone at SPARC can paint. Green represents the season, spring, when leaves begin to emerge." From choosing the bright paint colors, applying them with a paint roller extension pole, to using the tires of their wheelchairs to paint instead of brushes, the artists created original patterns across the painting papers that provided a canvaslike surface with no buckling. A completed work, matted and framed above shows the artist's



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Katherine Montgomery of Herndon, secretary of the SPARC board of directors, and Carla Claire of Arlington

wheelchair tracks and was one of many sold during the silent auction.

From the roast beef carving station to the crispy chicken sliders, black-eyed pea hummus with vegetable crudites, and the dessert display of miniature cupcakes, chocolate truffles, and petit fours, SPARC participants planned every aspect of the gala. Award-winning chefs at the hotel prepared all of those dishes and more. The hotel's wait staff came forward as volunteers to support the fundraiser, serving the guests and thereby helping to cover the organization's costs. Guests noticed the event venue's all-around inclusive layout — wheelchair accessibility, stage ramp, and deliberate lack of high-top tables.

As master of ceremonies and emcee, Jim Dyke oversaw the proceedings. "You have given your time, energy, and wherewithal to celebrate some of the most important, courageous, but often forgotten people in our community and, at the same time, make their dreams come true," Dyke said.

SEE GALA, PAGE 16

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Reduction of Commercial Vacancies in Fairfax City

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**B**ucking national and regional trends, Fairfax City is celebrating a reduction in commercial vacancies across the board for 2023. According to Nicole Toulouse, senior vice president of the City's Economic Development Authority, "In contrast with larger markets, Fairfax City – with lower, market-rate rent coupled with more right-sized opportunities – is seeing substantial, post-pandemic success."

General vacancy rates in Fairfax City have decreased from 6.6 percent at the beginning of the year to 6 percent in the third quarter. Office vacancies have seen a similar reduction from 9.8 percent to 9 percent, and retail vacancies have been reduced from 2.8 percent to 2.3 percent. As a result, this reduction in commercial vacancies is anticipated to improve Fairfax City's expected revenues.

Following the pandemic, Fairfax City Economic Development (FCED) launched several programs that are contributing to these improving numbers. The Lease Incentives for Fairfax Tenants (LIFFT) program began this spring and awards new or expanding City businesses grants if they sign a new lease in a high-vacancy office building, based on the square footage they'll occupy.

"This program and its promotion have done a great deal to both improve tenancy and commercial brokers' interest generally in Fairfax City," said Toulouse. "The

FCED also administers a Technology Zone incentive program, in partnership with the City's Commissioner of the Revenue, to qualified technology businesses signing a five-year or more lease in Fairfax City. This incentive abates business-license taxes for qualified businesses on a decelerating basis, for five years."

"We've long felt that Fairfax City is optimally positioned for the relocation and growth of businesses, particularly those looking to locate in the geographic center of Northern Virginia's steady and innovative economy," added EDA Chair Beth Young. "FCED's programs create expanded opportunities for businesses who otherwise may look elsewhere."

Economic Development Director Chris Bruno said this new data shows that Fairfax City is competitive and in demand. "As a city, we provide our residents and businesses with excellent services, so they want to be here," he explained. "Northern Virginia and Fairfax City are the ideal locations to start, expand and develop new companies. I applaud the staff for developing smart programming that allows FCED to advance the goals of the Mayor and City Council in a meaningful way."

The bottom line, said Toulouse, is that "People are looking for value and resources. Fairfax City has attractive rental rates, business assistance resources like direct grants, and procurement or financing guidance from the half dozen SBDC [Small Business Development Center] partners headquartered here. We feel confident about our value proposition to those looking to relocate."

## BULLETIN BOARD

### AEROMEXICO TO LAUNCH NONSTOP SERVICE FROM DULLES INTERNATIONAL TO MEXICO CITY

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority announced that Aeromexico will begin new nonstop service between Mexico City (MEX) and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) on July 1, 2024. Flights will operate daily year-round. With the start of this and other routes, Aeromexico will serve 36 U.S. markets by July 2024.

TUESDAY/NOV. 14  
Entrepreneurship 101 -- Workshop

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

on Starting a Business in Fairfax County. 7:30-11:30 a.m. If you are thinking about starting a business then Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) is ready to assist you. Founder of Veterans Growing America Donnell E. Johns, Sr., will be the featured guest speaker during FCEDA's next Entrepreneurship 101 (E-101) workshop. This in-person event will be hosted by Fairfax County Economic Development Authority at 8300 Boone Boulevard, Tysons. During this interactive workshop, you will hear from Veteran and Entrepreneur Donnell Johns talk

about his entrepreneurial journey of founding and growing Veterans Growing America, a social platform for veterans, military spouses, and their supporters to grow their own businesses. You will also hear from a panel of experts on registering your business, permitting requirements, business feasibility and business plan basics, business certifications, financing options and government resources. Visit [www.fairfaxcountyyeda.org](http://www.fairfaxcountyyeda.org).

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

# CRAFT SHOW



**300+ ARTISANS**  
Featuring quality fine arts & crafts, Christmas collectibles, shabby chic & vintage re-creations, handcrafted edibles, reclaimed furniture unique gifts & thousands of home decorating ideas for the holidays.

**NOVEMBER 10-12**  
Friday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm

**DULLES EXPO CENTER**  
4368 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly, VA  
Admission \$9 Adults - Children 12 & Under Free  
See website to buy tickets online  
Use Code: NVMCLC for \$1 off

**For \$1 OFF** at the door please bring a canned food donation to benefit the Capital Area Food Bank  
**Free Parking & Second Day Return**

Events Management Group (757) 417-7771 [www.emgshows.com](http://www.emgshows.com)  
**For Discounts & Reminders to Future Shows, Complete & Present to Box Office**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ 56p2.16  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reach your audience in 2024

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!



For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)

**THE CONNECTION**  
Newspapers & Online

Mount Vernon Gazette

Alexandria Gazette Packet

Potomac ALMANAC

[www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising)



COME TO

## Lorton BARBER SHOP

SERVING YOU SINCE 1999

Classic & trendy Styles

## GUNSTON CORNER VILLAGE CENTER

CLOSE AND CONVENIENT!

Monday - Friday 9AM - 7PM  
Saturday 8AM - 6PM  
Sunday 10AM - 4PM

**(703) 495-9029**

8220 Gunston Corner Lane  
Lorton, VA 22079

**\$2.00 DISCOUNT**  
For New Customers

**\$2.00 DISCOUNT**  
For Successful Referrals



## NEWS

# County's Hypothermia Prevention Program Opens Dec. 1

2023 homelessness statistics show 10 percent increase in people experiencing homelessness at the Point in Time count.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Consistently cold weather will be on its way soon, with nighttime temperatures dipping into the low 30s and the 20s. Since 2005, the county's Hypothermia Prevention Program has prevented death and serious injuries among Fairfax County's most vulnerable residents since 2005 by ensuring that no one must sleep outside during the winter months.

According to Danien Johnson with the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program is an integral part of the county's effort to prevent and end homelessness. The program incorporates the collaborative work of area contracted providers, faith communities, civic organizations, businesses and individual volunteers.

"The protocols for hypothermia season are consistent across the county. During the hypothermia season, due to the added vulnerabilities presented by extremely low temperatures, persons experiencing homelessness can access services through overflow in the emergency shelters," Johnson said.

The 2023-24 Hypothermia Prevention Program in Fairfax County runs from Dec. 1, 2023, until March 31, 2024. There are sites around the county including in the following communities: Richmond Highway/Alexandria area; Reston/Herndon; Falls Church/Alexandria area; and Fairfax and Centreville.

Last year, the program served an average of 215 guests per night, according to the program's website. Any adult in need of immediate shelter can receive warm shelter,



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION

Some individuals experiencing homelessness choose not to go to shelters, and some nights before and after the program is available are very cold.

food and other supportive services to help connect guests to a variety of basic needs such as clothing, employment, housing, and more.

Johnson added that, as space is limited for overflow, sometimes contracted partner agencies must work more collaboratively. "For example, if an individual accesses overflow in the Centreville area but space is unavailable, the provider will contact partners in other regions to determine the availability of space and help the client with transportation to the respective shelter."

Not all individuals who are experiencing

homelessness choose to access shelters, nor do they have access to warm, safe accommodations through friends, family, and other programs and services.

Fairfax County conducted its 2023 Point-In-Time Count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on the night of Jan. 25, 2023. Results reported 1,310 total persons experiencing homelessness, a 10 percent increase from 2022, including 767 households, 847 adults, and 460 children.

A look at December 2022 temperatures in Fairfax reported for the first week in December 2022, Dec. 1 low of 28; Dec. 2 low of 21;

Dec. 3 low of 45; Dec. 4 low of 27.

## Getting Family Help

Adults with children (ages 0-17) should contact Coordinated Services Planning at 703-222-0880 (TTY 711), Monday - Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for referrals to family-oriented support and services. If you need assistance after hours, contact or visit one of the county's family shelters - locations and contact information are available

For more information: <https://bit.ly/Fairfax-Hypothermia-Program>.

## Nov. 7 General Election What's happening at polling places on Election Day.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Ten minutes before election officials opened the doors at 6 a.m. to the polling place for Fairfax County Dranesville Precinct 320 in Northern Virginia, Democratic and GOP volunteers scurried about in the parking lot of the community center to set up their tents and have their stacks of sample ballots ready to hand out to voters. A line had already formed inside the building as early-bird Election Day 2023 voters prepared to cast their ballots on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Stakes are high at the state level in Virginia during this year's midterm election and closely watched within the Commonwealth and nationally. Although Republican Gov.

Glenn Youngkin's four-year term runs another two years and the office is not on the ballot, voters will decide which party controls each chamber of the General Assembly with all 140 seats on the ballot.

Virginia is one of only four states where all seats in the General Assembly are on the ballot for the first time since 2019. The Virginia legislature could see more turnover than usual, resulting from this being the first election under the new set of district maps.

According to an Oct. 17, 2023 survey by The Wason Center, at Christopher Newport University, "Virginia likely voters are split on whether they intend to support the Democratic or Republican Party's candidate in their district for the General Assembly (42 percent to 41 percent)."

In Virginia, Democrats currently control

the Senate, by a 22-17 margin. To check Youngkin's conservative GOP agenda, Democrats seek to maintain control of the Senate and hopefully flip the GOP-controlled House of Delegates, which Republicans won by a narrow margin in 2021, 52-48.

Youngkin is pushing to win full control of both the Virginia Senate and House. If Republicans manage to take control of both chambers, this would grant them a GOP trifecta, whereby the same party controls both chambers of the state legislature and the governorship. This would ensure that Governor Youngkin could move forward with his conservative agenda.

The Wason Center opined, "A strong showing for Republicans could provide a blueprint for the party nationally around how to discuss abortion and how to highlight K-12 education issues successfully. Some suggest that if Repub-

licans have a particularly strong showing in the state's elections, Governor Youngkin may consider a late entry to the Republican presidential primary." The Wason Center reported the margin of error for the survey is +/-4.0 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence.

At 11:15, 333 voters from precinct 320 at Herndon Community Center had voted, according to Kristin O'Brien, chief election officer.

The Connection is going to press as voting is underway. Check our website at [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com) and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ConnectionNewspapers/>

Virginia Department of Elections will report results at <https://enr.elections.virginia.gov/results/public/Virginia/elections/2023-Nov-Gen>

# NEWS

## Affordable Housing to Accept Waitlist Applications from Older Adults Nov. 13-19, 2023

Older adults interested in applying to affordable housing waitlists will have the opportunity Nov. 13-19, 2023 for select properties in the county.

❖ **The Fallstead:** One-bedroom apartments for older adults (ages 62+) located at 1609 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101

❖ **One University Senior (The Belmont):** One-bedroom apartments for older adults (ages 62+) to be located at 4518 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. This property is currently under construction.

**How to Apply:** Interested individuals can apply via Rent Café, which is an online housing application portal. The link for applications will go live at 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 13, 2023 on the Fairfax County Housing and Community Development website, and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023.

Instructions for using Rent Café can be found here [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/sites/housing/files/assets/documents/pbv/rent\\_cafe\\_guide\\_november\\_2023.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/sites/housing/files/assets/documents/pbv/rent_cafe_guide_november_2023.pdf). Individuals who need assistance can call 703-246-5100 or come to the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) office at 3700

Pender Drive in Fairfax, VA.

Applicants will be randomly placed on a waiting list for these properties. All applications received have an equal opportunity to be selected. Once a unit becomes available, the waiting list applicants will be contacted, screened, and determined eligible based on income level, household size, and the size of the rental unit. Households cannot currently be receiving other federal rental housing assistance to qualify.

### Federal Housing Funds Make a Local Impact in Fairfax

This affordable housing opportunity is made available through the "Project Based Voucher" program which provides rental assistance to eligible households to live in specific rental units. Through a contract with the owner of the unit, the FCRHA pays a portion of the monthly rent, while the household pays their portion of the monthly rent based upon 30% to 35% of adjusted gross income. The rental assistance is attached to the specific unit and remains at the property, even if the family moves. The FCRHA uses subsidies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Project Based Voucher program.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

### VIENNA TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTS REVISED ZONING CODE

After an extensive, three-year process to update the Town of Vienna's zoning code, the Vienna Town Council adopted the revised plan at its regular meeting last week at Town Hall. The newly adopted ordinance will take effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The purpose of the project referred to as Code Create Vienna was to clarify, simplify, reorganize, and update key chapters of the Town code. Among other things, the update provides opportunities for residents to enhance outdoor living space to accommodate modern lifestyles, requires more green space in commercial areas and gives businesses greater flexibility to explore more commercial opportunities. To learn more about the recently adopted zoning and subdivision code, visit [www.viennava.gov/codeupdates](http://www.viennava.gov/codeupdates).

### HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Town of Vienna residents and businesses are encouraged to compete in this year's "Shine Bright, Vienna" holiday decorating contest sponsored by the Town

Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) and the Vienna Parks and Recreation Department and the Vienna Economic Development Department. Applications for the 2024 contest are now available online at [www.viennava.gov/holiday](http://www.viennava.gov/holiday) or at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE. To be considered for the contest, participants must submit a completed application and a photo of their display by Nov. 21, 2023. All decorations must be visible from the street.

### MCLEAN NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS

The club was founded in 1969 to create new friendships, provide opportunities for socializing and acquaint residents with the community. It sponsors many group activities including: Anything with food, Armchair Traveler, Book Club, Bunco, Canasta, Crafty Ladies, Genealogy, Golf, Let Us Lunch, Mah Jongg, Mah Jongg NY Style, Movie Lovers, Museums/House and Garden Tours, Nature Walks, Restaurant Critics, Sing for Fun and Tech Forums. Application forms may be mailed to: Membership McLean Newcomers and Neighbors, P.O. Box 6166, McLean, VA 22106. Visit the website: [www.mcleannewcomers.org](http://www.mcleannewcomers.org).

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

A GAYLORD HOTELS ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE



# ICE!

FEATURING **RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER**

Save now on tickets to experience the must-see holiday attraction of the season! Step into a winter wonderland filled with larger-than-life ice sculptures inspired by the holiday classic, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

**MERRY DISCOUNT DAYS**  
SAVE UP TO **20% OFF\***  
OVERNIGHT STAYS & TICKETS  
Now through November 16

**NOV. 19 - DEC. 31**  
[ChristmasAtGaylordNational.com](http://ChristmasAtGaylordNational.com)

**SO. MUCH. CHRISTMAS.**

\*Terms and conditions apply. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and all related elements © & ™ under license to Character Arts, LLC. All rights reserved.

**GAYLORD NATIONAL**



Herney was a misfit, so was Rudolph. They were two of a kind, so these new friends set off to see what they could find.

**Same Company, Same Employees, Same Great Value - Now Celebrating 20 Years!**

## TWO POOR TEACHERS

### Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling



- Electrical (ELE)
- Gas Fitting (GFC)
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVA)
- Plumbing (PLB)
- Residential Building (RBC)

Fully Insured & Class A Licensed Since 1999



**10% down**  
nothing until the job is complete for the past 17 years

**Free Estimates 703-999-2929**

Check if your contractor is licensed at the state level <http://www.DPOR.virginia.gov>

**Visit our website: [www.twopoorteachers.com](http://www.twopoorteachers.com)**

# ENTERTAINMENT

## STARTING NOW

**Sip & Stroll.** At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Shopping with a Twist will be in effect daily during center hours (10 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat. /11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun.), although individual restaurant hours may vary. Adult beverages must be in a logo'd disposable cup provided by the restaurant where the drink was purchased. Only alcoholic beverages purchased from participating restaurants may be taken outside the restaurant and into the shopping center. No outside alcohol is permitted.

## WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

**Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

## FUNDAY MONDAY

**"Funday Monday"** is open to children of all ages, however is best suited for the preschool set! Funday Monday runs from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and — unless otherwise noted — is held at Fairfax Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There are plenty of free parking lots/garages in Old Town Fairfax. Stroller access is available at the side entrance Old Town Hall facing Route 236/Main Street. For more information visit [www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts).

## SCHEDULE

Nov. 13 -- No Program  
Nov. 20 -- My Gym  
Nov. 27 -- Drew Blue Shoes Magic  
Dec. 4 -- Music Together Sing and Groove  
Dec. 11 -- My Gym  
Dec. 18 -- TBD

## SATURDAYS THRU NOVEMBER

**Reston Museum.** See how Reston's founding principles were implemented by joining the upcoming walking tour. Tour will be held 10 a.m. every Saturday through November. Sign up at: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/event-details/guided-walking-tour-reston-founding-2023-09-09-10-00>

## BONITA LESTINA

### FAIRFAX OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

Enjoy an evening of music showcasing a variety of genres in the elegant interior of historic Old Town Hall (3999 University Drive) in the heart of Fairfax City. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and performances begin at 8 p.m. and run from October to April. Admission is free. Visit: [www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts).

## SCHEDULE

November 17: Graham Breedlove – Blues  
December 8: Marcolivia – Classical String Duo



The McLean Antiques Show & Sale takes place Nov. 11-12, 2023 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

January 5: Baltimore Composers Forum – Modern  
January 19: Navy Band Wind Quintet – Classical  
February 2: Kadencia – Puerto Rican Orchestra (part of the Chocolate Lovers Festival!)  
February 16: Matt Trkula – Classical Guitar  
March 8: Mandoleers – Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra  
March 22: James & Victor – Jazz Duo/Steel Pan  
April 5: Francesca Hurst – Solo Piano  
April 19: Sylvan Waters Duo – Harp/Brass

## NOV. 3 TO FEB. 4

**Eleanor Mahin Thorp: Metopic Ridge.** At Tephra ICA at Signature. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents Metopic Ridge, a solo exhibition by artist Eleanor Mahin Thorp. Thorp's paintings take us on an immersive site visit to examine the Blue Ridge Mountains exploring stability and change, the seen and the hidden within rocks. Through her discerning gaze rocks are more than geological entities; instead, they metamorphose into vessels of history and human connection. Drawing inspiration from the fascinating transformations depicted in Persian miniatures, Thorp traces the hidden figures and forms in the rocks. Her paintings reveal the duality of rocks' existence as both a firm witness to time and a medium for that which is intangible.

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8

**Foreign Language Film.** 6:30 p.m. Presented by The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden's foreign language movie series is curated by Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff, with more than a little help from you, our audience members! The series has a few surprises thrown in. The schedule is subject to change.

## NOV. 10-11

**Everything Christmas Sale.** Friday 3-7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to noon. At The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area Inc., located at The Herndon Moose Lodge, Second Floor, 779 Center Street, Herndon. The Everything Christmas Sale offers seasonal items including toys, holiday décor, ornaments, villages, wreaths, dishes, Christmas trees, and much more. All proceeds from the event benefit the local community in the way of grants and

scholarships. The Closet welcomes volunteers to help make this event a success. Volunteers are needed prior to the event to organize items, during the event to help with the sale, and after the event to help with clean up. To register to volunteer, visit <https://tinyurl.com/6cautau5>. The Closet is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. through 5 p.m., and Monday and Thursday evening from 5 – 8 p.m. For more information about The Closet, visit <http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org>.

## NOV. 11-12

### McLean Antiques Show & Sale.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Discover fine antiques, art and collectibles from scores of reputable dealers at this highly celebrated show of almost 50 years. The show features antiques, decorative accessories, furniture, folk art, porcelain, silver, jewelry, paintings and prints, glass, carpets, vintage clothing and more. Proceeds benefit the James C. MacDonald Scholarship Fund.



The Virginia Opera's "The Barber of Seville" can be seen Nov. 11-12, 2023, at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

## NOV. 11-12

**Virginia Opera: "The Barber of Seville."** Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. At The GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Get ready to laugh and cheer for everyone's favorite barber in this beloved masterpiece. Figaro, wily barber and wingman extraordinaire, is determined to help the lovestruck Count Almaviva woo the beautiful Rosina away from her lecherous guardian, Dr. Bartolo. Visit [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).



A Veteran's Day Ceremony will take place on Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023 at Great Falls Freedom Memorial in Great Falls.

## SATURDAY/NOV. 11

### Veteran's Day Ceremony.

11 a.m. At Great Falls Freedom Memorial, behind Great Falls Library 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The ceremony will honor all who have served our country in the Armed Forces. The event will include a color guard, patriotic songs, and remarks by Great Falls native Bruce Fein, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves. In case of rain, the ceremony will be held at the Grange. Seating will be provided, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own portable chairs.

## SATURDAY/NOV. 11

### Santa's Arrival, PJ Parties.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, Springfield. Santa arrives with lights and sirens blazing atop Greater Springfield Fire Department fire engines, accompanied by his friends from Fairfax County Police Department and Buddy the Elf, Ariel, Barbie, and Spiderman! Following his arrival, meet by the new light-up candy canes and holiday trees in the Grand Court on the Lower Level for a fun-filled PJ party. Put on your favorite holiday pajamas and enjoy the entertainment and activities! Festivities include glitter tattoos, balloon twisting, holiday caroling, character appearances, and a pajama donation drive.

## MONDAY/NOV. 13

### MAM Dinner – Military Appreciation

Monday. 5:30 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Restaurant in Great Falls. To support the Navy SEAL Foundation. Call the Old Brogue at 703-759-3309 to make a reservation.

## NOV. 13-14

**Auditions for "Shakspear in Hollywood."** 7:30-10 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Vienna Theater Company will be auditioning for its winter show, "Shakspear in Hollywood" on Nov 13th and 14th. Callbacks: By Invitation Only: November 15 from 7:30 – 10 p.m.

## TUESDAY/NOV. 14

### McLean Historical Society Meeting.

7:30 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The program will feature noted professional archaeologist and historian Patrick O'Neill who will discuss George Washington's Mount Vernon. There is no charge.

Everyone is invited. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 15

### Visiting Filmmakers Series.

4:30 p.m. At GMU's Johnson Center Cinema, Fairfax. A free screening of the new documentary, "Bad Press," followed by a post-screening Q&A with the filmmakers, Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler, and the film's subject, Angel Ellis. An enthralling tale that unfurls with the energy and suspense of a political thriller, "Bad Press" is a timely and unprecedented story about the battle for freedom of the press and against state-censored media. This event is free and open to the public. Register on Mason360.

## THURSDAY/NOV. 16

### Performing Arts Documentary.

1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through these one-hour (or so) documentaries. Join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

## NOV. 16-18

### "Peter and the Starcatcher."

Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. Presented by Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. The show tells the story of Peter Pan's origin story; appropriate for all ages. Tickets are \$10 General Admission, \$8 senior/military, \$7 students, and \$5 for children 5 and under. Tickets are available online, [mvhstheatrearts.com](http://mvhstheatrearts.com).

## NOV. 16-18

### "The Descendants."

Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. At Hayfield Middle School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants." The show is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are available online, [www.hayfield-drama.com](http://www.hayfield-drama.com), and at the door and cost \$10 each.

## NOV. 16-18

### "Almost, Maine."

7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Nov. 18. At Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. One deeply cold and magical Midwinter Night, the citizens of Almost -- not organized enough for a town, too populated for a wilderness -- experience the

[www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)



“Peter and the Starcatcher” can be seen at Mount Vernon High School on Nov. 16-18, 2023.



The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney’s “The Descendants” Nov. 16-18, 2023.

## Shepherd’s Center Needs More Volunteers

Shepherd’s Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), an all-volunteer organization, is seeking additional volunteers to support its mission of providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies.

The Center is an all-volunteer non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] that has been operating since 2006.

Shepherd’s Center volunteers provided 2,362 rides in 2022 and 2,758 rides thus far this year. Of the rides provided this year, 57% were medically related, 17% grocery, and 21% for physical therapy. The Center has added 35 new drivers this year and 83 new riders, so there’s a continued need for additional volunteers.

There is no set quota; volunteers are free to choose when and how often they drive. They can choose rides that are one-way or round trip. The best part is not only do drivers help those in need, they also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell.

For detailed information or to apply, please visit the Center’s website <https://scmafrc.org/volunteer> or call (703) 506-2199 and leave a message

Reston. Negin is a regular panelist for NPR. Her book, “How to Make White People Laugh,” was called “frank and hilarious,” and The Austin Chronicle calls her a “master humorist.” Visit [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com).

**SUNDAY/NOV. 19**  
**Musical Magic Balalaika Concert.** 3 p.m. At Kenmore Auditorium, 200 S. Carlin Springs Rd., Arlington. The Washington Balalaika Society will celebrate its 35th year with a wonderful concert, Musical Magic!, featuring new repertoire and old favorites. This new program was created by Conductor and Artistic Director, Svetlana Nikonova. This special anniversary concert will include soloists from the orchestra, as well as featuring an original composition by one of the youngest members. The program also includes compositions of classical composers, such as Mussorgsky, Elgar and Kreisler, as well as folk tunes, film themes and the spectacular Great Gate of Kiev! Tickets: Adults \$30; Seniors/Military \$25; Students \$15; Children 12 & under \$5. For tickets, visit [www.balalaika.org](http://www.balalaika.org).

**SUNDAY/NOV. 19**  
**Negin Farsad – Comedian.** 7 p.m. At CenterStage at Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road,

life-altering power of the human heart. Relationships end, begin, or change beyond recognition, as strangers become friends, friends become lovers, and lovers turn into strangers. Tickets are \$12 for guests and \$10 for students, staff and military on [lbtheatre.com](http://lbtheatre.com).

**SATURDAY/NOV. 18**  
**St. Timothy Craft Fair.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 13809 Poplar Tree Road, Chantilly. Featuring 50-plus vendors: jewelry, fine art, religious, pottery, fashion, home decor, Christmas, raffles and more. Admission: bring a canned good item to help support our St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. <https://sttimothyparish.org/craft-fair/>

**SATURDAY/NOV. 18**  
**FSO with Renee Fleming.** 8-10 p.m.  
[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Renée Fleming, one of the most celebrated singers of our time, joins the Fairfax Symphony for an exclusive evening featuring the exquisite Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss. Cost: \$100, \$75, \$50; half-price for youth through Grade 12. Call 703-993-2787.

**SATURDAY/NOV. 18**  
**FallFest.** 12:30 to 5 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Come for the day and join FSRM as they host the original Bavarian Dance Group of Washington ‘Alt Washingtonia’ for dancing, yodeling, cowbell ringing, Alphorns, and traditional German Food and Crafts. ‘Alt Washingtonia’ will provide

entertainment in the true Bavarian style, come and watch, but come to learn and participate. Performances are at 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4 p.m.. You can join in the dancing, try your hand at blowing an Alphorn, ringing a cowbell, and more. Enjoy German food and snacks (extra fee) and create and learn about traditional German Holiday Crafts. One craft per person (a ticket will be provided at admission). If you wish to make additional crafts purchase, tickets for \$1 each (all while supplies last). [www.Fairfax-station.org](http://www.Fairfax-station.org), [www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

# CONNECTION

[www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com)  
 Twitter @followfairfax

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
**Local Media Connection LLC**

1606 King Street  
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to [connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe](http://connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe)

**NEWS DEPARTMENT:**  
[south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mary Kimm  
 Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Bonnie Hobbs  
 Community Reporter, 703-778-9415  
[bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mercia Hobson  
 Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
 Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Ken Moore  
 Contributing Writer  
[kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com)

Susan Laume  
 Contributing Writer

**ADVERTISING:**  
 For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
 703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
 Display Advertising/National Sales  
 703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
 Marketing Assistant  
 703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Classified & Employment Advertising**  
 703-778-9431

**Editor & Publisher**  
 Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
 @MaryKimm

**Publisher**  
 Jerry Vernon  
 703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**In Memoriam Managing Editor**  
 Kemal Kurspahic

**Art/Design:**  
 Laurence Foong  
**Production Manager:**  
 Geovani Flores

**CIRCULATION**  
**Circulation Manager:**  
 Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)



1300 TABLES! Buy! Sell! Trade! VPN

# NATION'S GUN SHOW

**NOV. 17, 18 & 19**

**DULLES EXPO**

4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly, VA 20151

**FRI: 3-8 | SAT: 9-5 | SUN: 10-5**

VA & Utah CCW Courses  
(571) 237-9138

**\$1 Off One Adult Admission**

www.TheNationsGunShow.com | www.ShowmastersGunShows.com

# PROTECT

## WHAT MATTERS MOST

Whether you are home or away, protect what matters most from unexpected power outages with a Generac Home Standby Generator.

**\$0 MONEY DOWN + LOW MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Contact a Generac dealer for full terms and conditions.



**REQUEST A FREE QUOTE**  
**CALL NOW BEFORE THE NEXT POWER OUTAGE**

**(844) 947-1479**

**FREE 7-year Extended Warranty\* - A \$735 Value!**

**GENERAC**

\*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.

# LeafFilter

## GUTTER PROTECTION

### CLOG-FREE GUTTERS FOREVER

BEFORE LeafFilter



AFTER LeafFilter



**EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!**

**15% OFF + 10% OFF + 0%**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE SENIORS & MILITARY! APR FOR 24 MONTHS\*\*

**Promo Code: 285**

**FREE GUTTER ALIGNMENT + FREE GUTTER CLEANING\***

**CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE** **1-877-614-6667**

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

**A COMPANY OF LEAFHOME**

\*\*Wells Fargo Home Projects credit card is issued by Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., an Equal Housing Lender. Special terms for 24 mo. apply to qualifying purchases of \$1,000 or more with approved credit. Minimum monthly payments will not pay off balance before end of promotional period. APR for new purchases is 28.99% Effective: 01/01/2023. Subject to change. Call 1-800-431-5921 for complete details. 27th leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16-month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the #1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America. \*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. Offer valid at time of estimate only. See Representative for full warranty details. Manufactured in Plainville, Michigan and processed at LMTherac Group in Ohio. AR #036620022, CA #1035795, CT #HC 0649005, FL #CBC056678, IA #C127230, ID #RCE-S1604, LA #559544, MA #176447, MD #MHC148329, MI # 2102212886, #762000022, #7620000403, #2108212946, NY #R7131804, MT #226192, ND 47304, NE #5014524, NJ #134105955900, NV #4080593, NV #0808950, NY #119114, HI-52223, OR #2119234, PA #PA069383, RI #RSC-41354, TN #7656, UT #10783658-5501, VA #2705169445, WA #LEAFFTW8232, WY #W056912.

# CLASSIFIED

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

### The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY



**\$1000 OFF\***

AND

**No Payments & No Interest For 18 Months\*\***

OFFER EXPIRES 12.31.2023

**BCI BATH & SHOWER**

**CALL NOW (844) 945-1631**

\*Includes product and labor; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 12/31/23. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. \*\*Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. See your dealer for details. ©2023 BCI Acrylic, Inc.

### Make the smart and ONLY CHOICE when tackling your roof!

**ERIC** Metal Roofs

**FREE ESTIMATE**  
**1.844.902.4611**

Expires 12/31/2023

Limited Time Offer!  
**SAVE!**

Up to **50% OFF**  
ON YOUR INSTALLATION  
+  
TAKE AN ADDITIONAL  
**10% OFF**

Additional savings for military, health workers and first responders

New orders only. Does not include material costs. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Minimum purchase required. Other restrictions may apply. This is an advertisement placed on behalf of Eric Construction Mid West, Inc ("Eric"). Offer terms and conditions may apply and the offer may not be available in your area. If you call the number provided, you consent to being contacted by telephone, SMS text message, email, pre-recorded messages by Eric or its affiliates and service providers using automated technologies notwithstanding if you are on a DO NOT CALL list or register. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use on homeresources.compliance.com. All rights reserved. License numbers available at ericmetalroofs.com/eric-licenses/. VA License Number: 2705029944.

### Be a part of our:

**Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

**Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

**Questions?**  
E-mail [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) or call 703-778-9431

**THE CONNECTION**  
NEWSPAPERS

## TAX NOTICE

### CITY OF FAIRFAX

#### REAL ESTATE TAX PAYMENTS ARE DUE

Real Estate tax bills have been mailed and are due **Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

We continue to receive a high number of tax complaints that either no paper tax bill was received, or that mailed payments did not make it to city hall. **When paying, please consider using our 24-hour drop box located at 10455 Armstrong Street (at the front of City Hall, next to the flag poles) in lieu of the USPS. (Checks only, no Cash)**

#### LATE PAYMENT PENALTY

To avoid incurring a 10%, \$10 minimum, late payment penalty and interest of 10% per annum, **payment in full must be received or postmarked by close-of-business on Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

Taxes may be paid online, by mail, or in-person to the City Treasurer's Office (City Hall, Suite 234) 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)

### IMPORTANT

**Even if you do not receive a physical bill, to avoid late payment penalties you are still responsible for requesting a copy and remitting payment by Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

For Additional Information, please check the City website at [www.FairfaxVA.gov](http://www.FairfaxVA.gov) or call (703) 385-7900

**Let us know about an upcoming event**

[www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar)

# BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 11

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) or [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriend-A-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at [info@scmaf.org](mailto:info@scmaf.org). The Center's website is [www.scmaf.org](http://www.scmaf.org).

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit [fairfaxgardening.org](http://fairfaxgardening.org) or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: [prsinc.org/caring-volunteer-ing/](http://prsinc.org/caring-volunteer-ing/). Questions? Email [lpadgett@prsinc.org](mailto:lpadgett@prsinc.org).

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov). Also visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/).

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or [Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov).

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs a Certified Arthritis Exercise Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Volunteers for Change. A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

Great Falls Hike or Bike Volunteers. Bike or Hike Patrol volunteers assist park rangers by riding on accessible trails in Great Falls Park. To assist park staff in providing info and services to park visitors, maintain good public relations as a representative of the National Park Service, and monitor park resources, visitor usage, and emergency needs. Skills and Experience Desired: Excellent communication skills. Ability to work with culturally, socially, and economically diversified people. Knowledge of the park and local resources, or the desire to learn. Knowledge of basic bike maintenance or willingness to learn. Willingness to provide basic first aid. Ability to demonstrate skill in basic operation of a bicycle. Call Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225

Potomac Paddlers Volunteer Corps. The Potomac Paddlers Corps is a volunteer group with the National Park Service under shared management between Great Falls Park and the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The primary mission of the Corps is to have trained, uniformed park volunteers on the Potomac River to assist the park in identifying and reporting incidents, watch out for risky park visitor behavior, and to deliver safety messages to the public about the dangers of the Potomac River in the Potomac Gorge. Contact: Volunteer Coordinator 703-285-2965 ext. 225 or visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

## ONGOING

1 Million Cups. Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. networking; 9-10 a.m. program at Make Offices at Tysons, 1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 600, McLean. Each week a different business owner gives a brief six-minute presentation about where they are in their business. They then offer up a challenge question about a new idea, product, expansion or something they are facing in their business. The group then masterminds solutions. Free and open to the public. Visit [www.1millioncups.com/](http://www.1millioncups.com/).

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) invites women living in the Langley High School District or The Estates of Lowes Island to learn more about the group. The purpose of GFFN is to establish and foster an atmosphere in which new and current residents can develop new friendships and community contacts through social, educational and cultural activities. In addition, the club provides service, support and donations to philanthropic and civic organizations in and around the Great Falls community. Email [info@gffnva.org](mailto:info@gffnva.org) or visit [www.gffnva.org](http://www.gffnva.org).

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALL 703-549-0004

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

<b>ELECTRICAL</b>	<b>ELECTRICAL</b>
<b>K &amp; D ELECTRIC</b> COMMERCIAL / RESIDENTIAL SERVICE Family Owned & Operated	
Recessed Lighting Ceiling Fans Phone/CATV Computer Network Cabling Service Upgrades Hot Tubs, etc...	Licensed/Bonded/Insured Office 703-335-0654 Mobile 703-499-0522 <a href="mailto:lektrkman28@gmail.com">lektrkman28@gmail.com</a>
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>	<b>LANDSCAPING</b>
Landscape Drainage	Landscape Drainage
 <b>ProDrainage</b> A JES Services, Inc Company Eco-Friendly Landscape Drainage Experts Drainage, Erosion, Landscaping, Hardscaping, Patios, Retaining Walls & More Your Neighborhood Company since 1987! <b>703-772-0500</b> <a href="http://www.ProDrainage.com">www.ProDrainage.com</a> VA. Licensed Class A Contractor	



**Sign up for  
FREE DIGITAL  
SUBSCRIPTION**  
to any or all of our 15 papers  
[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE)



**We Need Your Help Again**  
We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784



And affiliated newspapers:  
**THE CONNECTION** Newspapers & Online  
**Mount Vernon Gazette**  
**Potomac Almanac**  
**Centre View**

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of our dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>  
 Connection Newspapers—Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette, Centre View, Potomac Almanac  
 1606 King Street • Alexandria, VA • 703-778-9431

## Bucket List-less



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As you regular readers have no doubt read in a previous column (or 500) I have cancer. I was first diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV in late February 2009. When I didn't die within my "13 month to two years" prognosis, my oncologist was surprised; nevertheless, he didn't pursue any medical explanation. He just characterized me as his "third miracle" and my treatment continued relatively unabated. It wasn't for another seven years or so that my diagnosis changed to papillary thyroid cancer. Whether my oncologist made an error in my original diagnosis or was slow to change/update my diagnosis, we'll never know as my original tissue sample/slide has been lost (I won't say conveniently). Moreover, the statute of limitations has expired so any incentive to research/investigate was lost in the figurative rubble. No real worries though. I have learned to live with it (live being the operative word) and besides, my life would have changed little since the damage was long since done, and likely would have stressed me out more.

But I must confess, living with incurable cancer is all it's cracked up to be. Meaning it's not exactly a picnic. If you've read any my last umpteen columns on the matter, cancer does more than just invade your body, it affects you emotionally, almost subconsciously, as it re-wires your brain, sort of. And there's not a thing you can do about it. What you value, what you can tolerate, what motivates you; anything you want to say or do is filtered through this imaginary prism called cancer. And what goes in doesn't always come out as you expected, or have heard yourself saying, or seen yourself doing, or had expressed an interest in saying or doing like you had for the entirety of your previous life. This the new you, like it or not.

It is in this context that us cancer (or any other terminal-type situation) survivors are regularly asked what we want to do with the rest of our lives - or a reasonable facsimile thereof. Specifically, this awkward conversation inevitably veers into whether we have a "bucket list": a list of sorts of the things you want to do before you die, places you want to visit, people you want to see, et cetera; and maybe even the songs you want to hear: "Live Like You're Dying" by Tim McGraw comes to mind.

When the opportunity (more like misfortune) presents itself at your ground-zero-type meeting with an oncologist when you hear the words "You have cancer" for the first time, you are changed forever, and not just physically, but every which way - and some you never imagined as well. Invariably, what is asked and/or what you think about your new reality as a "terminal" cancer patient, your answer is the framework of the all-too-familiar bucket list: the things/choices/places you want to do/say/go; presuming/understanding that you no longer have as much time as you thought you did - before this appointment. There's no future "woeing" is me, there's only the present and accepting/assimilating your new circumstances into your routine. Fighting it is one thing, but embracing it is quite another. Unfortunately, the odds/statistics are against you, but so what? Cancer may be the big dog, but if I want to get on the porch, I'm going to do so. Because even though cancer and all its insidious ways likely has other plans for you, plans you probably need to agree and proceed to, as we say in the sales world, standing pat ain't gonna cut it anymore. And cancer is as big a hurdle as there is. All you can do is learn to roll with the punches and put one foot in front of the other. And more often than not, my bucket-list answer surprises.

I want to live life like I'm living, not live like I'm anticipating dying. I don't want to fill up this hypothetical bucket, I want to empty it. Furthermore, I'd rather enjoy and appreciate what I have - and had, not think about what I don't have/didn't do.

After hearing what I heard - out of the blue no less, at that initial meeting with the oncologist, about my abbreviated life expectancy; to say it knocks you for a loop is to minimize loops everywhere. This 'loop' is more like the roller coaster from hell. Up and down and all-around is just the beginning. And one ride is more than enough. But you're going to be on this ride for the rest of your life so hunker down and buckle up. Eventually, at least I did, you get it sorted in some way which enables you to live life forward. I felt that if I was doing something on my so-called "bucket list," the reason for doing that thing was because I was dying and I wanted to do it before I died. To me, that would be reinforcing a negative. That's not how I want to decide that whatever it is I'm doing. I want to decide based on the merits/intrinsic value of the thing. To me, the 'bucket list' concept is too negative. I want to do things because I want to do them, not because I have too not because of some theoretical list of do-or-die experiences/accomplishments. Reinforcing a negative didn't/doesn't feel like a very positive thing to do. And here I am, nearly 15 years post-diagnosis.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

# GALA



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS  
Bailey Brandt of Springfield and Mikea Jackson

FROM PAGE 6

Dyke named the sponsors, including the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, Dominion Energy, Google, Tullman Family Office, Washington Gas, and The Washington Group Special Care Planning Team. Dyke told how Sen. Janet D. Howell (D-Fairfax) received the first SPARC Hero Award this past June and set a high standard for other recipients. According to Dyke, Howell's leadership resulted in the 2023-2024 Virginia state budget including, for the first time, an annual \$250,000 line item for SPARC, positioning it to become a pilot program for Virginia.

"SPARC has changed the long-term care blueprint for young adults with severe disabilities by providing a safe, caring environment where they learn and have fun together," said Rose Mario Risley, chair of Fairfax Area Long-Term Care Coordinating Council. "The SPARC model is designed to provide access to community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination."

SPARC has five clubhouse locations: Fairfax, McLean, Reston, Vienna, and Arlington.

Katherine Montgomery, a SPARC participant and secretary of the SPARC board, took to the stage, joining Dyke, as did U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, Sen. Richard L. Saslaw, Adam Toobin, Ellen Dyke, and Mark Ingrao auctioneer. Montgomery handed Kaine the award and said, "Thank you, Senator Kaine, for being a champion."

Montgomery commended Kaine for realizing the vital roles that family caregivers and direct care providers play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. She expressed her gratitude to him for his bill, the Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act, which directs the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Administration on Community Living (ACL), to develop a national care center for the direct care workforce and family caregivers. It affects not just SPARC members but also individuals with disabilities and chronic medical conditions.

The SPARC Hero Award is given to a person who has tirelessly worked to fill the huge hole in our social safety net that ignores and neglects far too many citizens and who works to remove barriers when others have declined to act. "It's very difficult to find direct care professionals because of the lack of compensation and the ability to provide a living wage," Montgomery said.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS  
Supervisor John W. Foust (Dranesville) holds his auction number as he joins Hazem Eldarwish of Falls Church and Josephie Nwalipenja.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS  
Front left, Patrick and Jennifer Callahan of Fairfax join Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield) and Madalyn Godfrey, Springfield District staff.

SPARC honored Saslaw with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Jim Dyke said that for this award, SPARC honors those talented, committed, and visionary individuals who have dedicated their careers and devoted their time and energy to improving the lives of others.

"Individuals who have had a major positive imprint on our community and whose actions and accomplishments have been transformative. If you put those guidelines into Google, no doubt up will pop Senator Dick Saslaw," said Dyke.

Toobin presented Saslaw with the award and told Saslaw what his support meant to him and his friends. It meant that when he had COVID, he could join his SPARC friends from home on his computer and was still able to participate in the activities.

Shawn Flaherty, a board member at large and communications chair, reported that as of Monday, Nov. 6, SPARC had raised \$152,000 during the gala.

SPARC offers day programs five days a week. Programs include a curriculum based on daily living activities like continued education, skill building, exercise, outings, cooking, music, art, lectures, discussion groups, and more. The annual cost for each participant is \$9,000, compared to an average of \$39,000 per year in publicly funded costs for a program through Medicaid.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Left, SPARC participants are abstract impressionist painters. A video beside the red carpet shows the process for the talented artists to create their original Wheelchair Action Art.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SPARC

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine receives his Hero Cape from Ellen Dyke chair of SPARC, as Jim Dyke, gala master of ceremonies, looks on.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

SPARC participants gathered with friends at the gala. From front left clockwise, Akila Ranatunga of Annandale, Numi Aslam of Fairfax, Cathy Strother of Springfield, Jonah Gilman of Springfield, Katherine Montgomery of Herndon, and Sandy Sher of Springfield.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM